

A N
EXHORTATION
TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
DOWN and CONNOR,
Concerning the
Religious EDUCATION
OF THEIR
CHILDREN
In general; and particularly in order to their being
CONFIRMED.

By *Samuel*, Lord Bishop of *Down and Connor*.

Foley

Imprimatur,

March 9. 1694₃

NARCISSUS Dublin.

DUBLIN:

Printed by *Joseph Ray*, next to the *Custom-House*, 1695.

ERRATA:

PAg. 1. Lin. 4. Read *Diocesses*. p. 5. l. 8. r. *neglect*. p. 12. l. 17. r. *one*. *ibid.*
l. 22. r. *their*. p. 18. l. 1. r. *as*. *ibid.* 21. r. *those*. *ibid.* 22. r. *these*. p. 20.
l. 22. r. *advantage*. p. 25. l. 2. r. *your*.

T O
The Inhabitants of the Diocesses
O F
DOWN & CONNOR.

My Dear Friends,

WHile I am preparing to remove my Concerns, and settle among You, according to my duty in that Station which it has pleased God in his Providence to place Me in ; I have had many serious Thoughts how I may make my self most serviceable to your Souls. And finding among other things that there has been for several years past a sad neglect among you of the publick Instruction of Children, and of their solemn taking upon themselves the Covenant that was made with God in their Names when they were Baptized; I have thought fit to begin with some Endeavours to remove this Fault; and in order thereunto do present you with some Considerations relating to the Religious Education and Instruction of Children in general, which I have chosen out of some Observations and Discourses that I formerly made for the use of those who were then under my Charge.

There are indeed some Excellent Discourses lately published on this Subject, from the matchless Pen of that
Great

Great Man the late Archbishop of Canterbury, but I fear very scarce among You ; and therefore I send You some of my own Thoughts, that those who can, may have the benefit of both ; and those who cannot, may at least have this Testimony of my Care and Watchfulness over them.

And what I here present to you I do earnestly entreat you to read over with attention, and to consider seriously how nearly you are concerned in it ; where you will find no controverted Point ; for altho the Name and Form of Confirmation be peculiar to the Established Church, yet the substance of it, the solemn professing themselves to be the Disciples of Christ, in the Congregation of the Faithfull, when they come to years of discretion, I am sure is a Duty incumbent on every One who calls himself a Christian ; as well as those parts of Education in general which I here recommend to you may reasonably be expected from every Christian Parent. And I heartily pray that Almighty God will make this small Essay a means of promoting his Glory by prevailing on Parents to discharge these main parts of their Duty towards their Children ; To which if by his Blessing these Papers shall in any measure contribute, it will be an unspeakable comfort to

Your truly Affectionate Friend

and Servant in the Lord.

Samuel Down and Connor.

A N

EXHORTATION

TO THE

Inhabitants of the Diocess of Down and Connor, &c.

C H A P. I.

Of the Importance of the Duty of Parents towards their Children.

I Know not how to begin this Exhortation with a more weighty or affecting Instance than that of *Abraham*, whom God was pleased to own as his *Friend*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 7. and to use with extraordinary freedom and condescension when He was about to destroy *Sodom*, insomuch that he admitted him to plead six several times on behalf of that wicked People, and would have spared them at his entreaty if there had been Ten Righteous Men among them, *Gen.* 18. The reason of which especial favour we have assigned by God himself in these words, *Vers.* 19. *For I know*

B

him

him that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do judgment and justice, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Certainly (my Brethren) the care of your Children which I am recommending to you must be an important Duty in the sight of God, when so great weight is laid upon it by him, and he was pleased after so signal a manner to own and reward it in his **Servant**. No doubt but he was pleased with *Abraham* upon other accounts also, but you see the reason of this extraordinary condescension in God is referr'd peculiarly to *Abraham's* care in the discharge of this Duty.

But alas! I am sorry to have occasion to observe, that in this age of ours this so important and most necessary Duty is most of all neglected, when there is generally so little care taken of Instructing Children in Gods ways, that if *Abraham* were now among Us and saw only the Religion of too many younger persons, 'tis to be suspected he would say of Us as he did of *Gerar*, *Gen. 20. 11*. Surely the fear of God is not in this place. This is a sad thing, and seriously to be laid to heart by us, and some conscientious and diligent endeavours ought to be applied for the remedy of it. In order to awaken you to which, I entreat you to remember that God has committed your Children to your custody, care, and conduct; and that

that at the great day of Judgment you must answer for those vices and misfortunes of theirs, which were occasioned by your neglect and ill management of them; and therefore you may apply to your selves what God was pleased to speak to the Prophet *Ezekiel* in the person of a Watchman, *Ezek. 3.*

18. When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. God has intrusted You with the government of your Children, and has commanded You to warn them from *their wicked ways* and to *save their lives*, and if you do not warn them, they shall die in *their sins*, but *their blood* God will require at your hands.

I am perswaded, the most careless person among you would exclaim against a wretch that would murder his Child, and say that no punishment is too great for such a miscreant; but then you do not consider, that while you suffer your Children to go on in their evil ways you are guilty of more grievous cruelty, because you are doing them much greater mischief. *Fear not him that kills the body*, says our Saviour, That is but a slight matter to the other; you are doing your parts towards casting both *body and soul into Hell fire*. And what shall you have to say for your selves, when God do's call you to account
for

for being so unnatural and cruel to your own Children, to Children of whom you now pretend to be extremely fond, and for whom you would have one think you are taking a great deal of pains.

There is little doubt to be made but that the greatest part of mankind do miscarry, and are ruin'd, for want of due care of their education when they were young. *Train up a child* (says King Solomon) *in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,* Prov. 22. 19. This commonly holds true on either side. If you train him up to piety and virtue, 'tis most likely that by the grace of God he will continue in that good way; but if you take no care of him, but suffer him to be train'd up by vicious Servants and Examples, that is, trained up by Satan; 'tis very probable he will continue in that service, and be always a child of wrath and of hell.

'Tis true, you cannot now foresee the course of life which they will lead hereafter, but let me tell you that at the great day you will have occasion to look back upon it; and consider I beseech you, what a sad thing it will be if you are then forced to remember that you did often wish and pray for Children, and that God gave them to you as Blessings; so you then understood his gifts, and so God intended them; but that you most unhappily neglected them when they were young, and they did fall into ill courses, and insensibly contracted many
ill

ill customs and habits, from which they were not after to be reclaimed; but lived an ungodly shameful life, good for nothing, serviceable to no body, but a disgrace to their Family, and a curse and plague to the Country they lived in; and to see them condemned to everlasting torments and misery; and all this, by your means, through your foolish fondness, and your stupid carelessness and neglects. Certainly (my Brethren) if God should never call Parents to account for this treacherous breach of trust, yet the grievous sentence they must of necessity pass upon themselves when they come to discover how instrumental they have been towards making their Children everlastingly miserable, ought to deter them from being guilty of so vile inhumanity.

And would to God that some Parents would consider this before it be too late, who would take it very ill, and think themselves mightily wronged, if one should charge them with want of tenderness towards their Children; Think, I pray, what a shame it is that some of you should take a great deal of pains and eat the *bread of carefulness*, that you may leave a great Estate to your Children, and by your own faults leave only useless and vile persons to inherit it; Think, what kindness you have really for your Children, whilest you breed them up only to be fit for Hell; and what an horrible thing it is, that you should bestow more pains, and costs, and

charges, it may be, upon the breeding up some Bruit-Beasts for your diversion, than you do upon the Education of your Sons and Daughters.

It has been often said by wise men, That the greatest advantage of Riches is, that people are by them enabled to give their Children the best sort of Education that can be had. But alas! we are so generally apt to make a wrong use of Gods Blessings, that too many Rich Men seem to think that the advantage which they have above the meaner sort is, that they are not bound to bring up their Children to any thing but folly and vanity. I have told You that the time will come when this will grieve them to the heart; but their trouble for it is not always put off to the next World, and I may venture to say, that many a Parent has lived to be sadly afflicted when they came to be sensible that their Children were ruined by their want of care of them; and that this very thing has lain heavy at their Hearts, and made them melancholly and uneasie in the midst of Riches and Honour.

On the other hand: Consider I beseech You, what a pleasant and happy thing it is for Parents to see their Children come to be men of Piety and Worth, to see them useful to the World, Instruments of God's Glory, and a Blessing to mankind. These are the blessed joyful effects of Care and Diligence.

A Man who breeds up his Son vertuously, and makes

makes him capable of some useful Station and Employment, is a Benefactor to the World, and a Friend of God, as *Abraham* was; and he must certainly have a great deal of comfort and rejoycing in his mind when he thinks with himself, that his Child is a Child of God, and that he has brought into the world a Blessing to it, and has bred up a Saint for Heaven.

In the name of God then, let Parents be persuaded to be thus kind, thus just, thus charitable to their Children and to themselves; to take this way to reform the World, and to make the next a godly and happy Age; to make their Children thus useful and happy, and to obtain the respect, and praises, and blessing of mankind for making them so happy and useful.

C H A P. II.

The parts of this Duty, and the manner of performing it.

I Have laid before You in a few words the Importance of the Duty of Parents towards their Children; The sum of which Duty is, that Parents must use all fit means to bring up their Children in the true Principles of Religion, and the practice of Virtue and Goodness. And this requires at least these Four things which I purpose distinctly to explain to You.

I. Du

1. Due Instruction in the necessary Articles of the Christian Faith, and in all the Duties of a Christian Life.

2. Good Examples in the Family, and as near as may be, in all with whom they converse.

3. Necessary Correction for their Faults.

4. That they be brought up to some honest Calling, whereby they may become serviceable both to themselves and to the publick.

1. Children must be instructed in the necessary Articles of Faith, and the Rules of Manners. For no man is born either wise or good, and which is worse, we do not come into the world with so much as an indifferencie towards good and evil; but from the unhappy fall of our first Parents, every one has brought into the world with him a bias which makes him more apt to receive evil than good impressions. And therefore since 'tis not an easie work to reconcile a vitious disposition to the Truth, but we find by experience that they who have been accustomed to delight themselves in *evil deeds*, will always *love darkness rather than light*; We cannot surely, if we have any tenderness for our Children, delay the instructing of them in our Religion, until such time as their fondness for Vice has made them Enemies unto it. And therefore we must reckon our selves obliged as soon as we find them capable of understanding Us, to give them by degrees such information, as
may



may fix the seeds of Piety and Virtue in their Hearts, before that the *Evil Man*, the sworn Enemy of their happiness, has cast in his *tares*.

It is my desire that persons of the meanest capacity may receive some benefit by this Discourse, and to that end I shall lay before you the sum of what you are mainly to press upon your Children in as plain and familiar a way as I can, by recommending three things to your care and practice.

That as soon as you find your Children capable of understanding any thing, you will teach them to *love God*. To which purpose, put them often in mind, that God at first made them, and do's now protect them from dangers, that 'tis from him that they have their Food and Raiment, and every thing that is comfortable to them, that he only can keep them in health and preserve them from many mischiefs and ill accidents. Tell them often, that God is a kind, and loving, and gracious Father to them, and that 'tis from his love and kindness that they have received every thing that they have, and that from the very same love they must hope for all that is desirable; and therefore that at least they must love him who has been so good to them; for they did neither deserve this from him, nor are they able to make any requital; and that if they are willing to love this good God, they must shew it by being very desirous to please him.

If you can but once fix this Principle in their hearts, that God has such kind intentions towards them, that he will make them for ever happy, if they do but desire and endeavour to please him, and that they cannot be unhappy if they do but love him with all their hearts, and make it appear that they love him by *keeping his Commandments*, this will be a steady foundation of a great deal of Piety and Goodness. For it will make them afraid of doing any thing that wou'd displease him, and make them take pleasure and delight in what they are told he loves. And as they grow older, they will oftner have occasion to take notice of, and to make remarks upon the kindness and goodness of God; and so that desire of pleasing him will increase and grow stronger in them.

But then you must first put them into the way of making such observations as these, you must use them to mark and consider these acts of God's Providence, by which he doth every day shew forth his goodness and loving kindness towards them; such as his daily supplying them with those things that are needful to make their lives easy and comfortable, his preserving them from those many dangers and mischances which they see often befall others, and his enabling them to resist the temptations of the Devil, and of wicked people, and to master their own evil inclinations. From whence you may also take an occasion often to put them in mind that they can do nothing that is good, nothing that

that will please God, without the grace and assistance of his holy Spirit, and that they must upon that account pray every day for that Grace, and beg heartily and earnestly that God will enable them to do all things according to his holy will.

And after that you have for some time thus trained up your Children to discern and take notice of the kindness and goodness of God in the common and daily instances of it, you may by degrees inform them of higher matters, and make them understand that wonderful and undeserved favour and love of his, in sending our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to die for us, that he might reconcile us to God whom we had offended, and procure pardon for all our sins, and make us again capable of his favour and of everlasting happiness. This must certainly increase their love for God and make them more earnest and Zealous to please him, when they come to know that his kindness for them was so great that he would not spare his only Son from death, when his dying might obtain for them such unspeakable Blessings. And that love and thankfulness which such considerations as these may raise in their hearts will undoubtedly have a powerful influence over their whole lives, and lead them naturally to the performance of every Christian duty with cheerfulness, when they come to be fully instructed in it.

adly, Teach them to *love all mankind.* Our Savi-
our

our has taught us to join together these two main Duties, *Mat. 22. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first and great Commandment; And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* That is, These are the two principal duties of every Man, and if he do's perform them as he ought, they will easily lead him into the practice of the rest.

When therefore you have perswaded your Children to love God, endeavour next to make them sensible that God is very much pleased when he sees that we do love one another; for we are all brethren, we have all of us one and the same God for our Father, one and the same Saviour who died for us all, one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism, and we are all labouring to be by the mercy of God, and the merits of his Son, made happy together in the same Heaven. Lay these things often before them, and take all occasions to make them understand the reasonableness of loving the fellow Christians, and teach them in all their actions and behaviour to observe that great and comprehensive Rule of Love and Equity given us by our Saviour, of *doing as we would be done unto*, and of doing nothing to other men which we should think unjust and unreasonable to be done to us by them; if we were in their condition and they in ours.

Do

Do but once bring them to the practice of this Rule, and it will insensibly draw them into the practice of many vertues and duties.

And in order to make way for this love of their Neighbours, be sure often to discourage and disgrace before them all sorts and degrees of ill-nature, and to make them hate the doing of any thing that is hurtful and injurious to others; and be sure never to allow them to do any thing out of Spight and Envy, or Revenge, but make them look upon those as black and odious Vices. Teach them to pity those whom they see in distress and misery, and let them see that you do take delight in relieving and doing good to those who are in great want and cannot help themselves. Put them in mind that when they do good, and kindneses to others, they do imitate God, and do like the Father of all mercies & consolations, but when they do hurt and mischief to any, they are like to the Devil, and the accursed Spirits in Hell. Shew them how impossible it is that they should live happily and securely, and at ease in this world, without the help, and love, and kindness of many other people; and therefore that it is but just and reasonable that they should take their turns of doing kindneses to others; and to encourage them to it, let them know that God has the greatest kindness for those people who do take most pains to do good in the world, and to promote the common happiness of

E

mankind.

mankind. If you can once convince them of this, and make them ambitious of being God's Instruments of doing good, I am perswaded it will prevail more effectually upon them to undertake the trouble and toil which Children are put to to attain to Learning and Trades (in order to make them in some sort useful and beneficial to mankind hereafter) than most other arguments that you can think of.

And here, before I leave this Head of Instructing your Children in the love of their Neighbours, I must earnestly exhort you of whatever persuasion you are, to imprint early in your Children an inclination to love goodness, and the Image of God, wheresoever they appear. Let them remember that God is no *Respecter of Persons*, that he Favours no man for being of this or that party, but among all people *they that fear God and work righteousness are accepted* of him; and that if they would be like him, and his Children indeed, they must love those whom he loves. Especially by no means suffer them to learn little scoffs or by-words against any persons way of worshipping God, who differs from that way in which they are brought up. For Religion is a serious thing, and the concern of the Soul, and the making light of it on any account tho it be against a way that we do not approve of, do's tend to create a contempt of all that is truly serious and sacred. Let me intreat you therefore to be careful what examples you do set your Children in this respect, and
not

not to let them hear you revile and disparage your Neighbours on account of their different persuasions or professions; for tho we are not all of one mind or of one way in those matters, yet all who truly love and serve God, ought to behave themselves towards one another as Children of the same heavenly Father; and if you teach your Children to take up prejudices against people, because of their different Opinions in Religion, this will by degrees beget an aversion towards them also upon other accounts, and destroy that universal love and good will which I have exhorted you by all means to endeavour to promote and encourage in them, as that which may prepare and form their minds for that blessed Society and Conversation hereafter, where shall be nothing but peace and love.

3dly, Teach them to love themselves. You must not think this an unnecessary work, because it is a principle that we do bring into the world with us; for it is plain that this very principle of loving our selves, for want of due instruction, does often prove our ruine. For we are commonly apt to think, that when we love our foolish lusts, and do most indulge and gratify our unreasonable appetites and desires, we do then chiefly love our selves. Whereas in good truth, this is hating our selves, and loving our most deadly and cruel Enemies.

Teach your Children therefore after what manner they may really and in good earnest love themselves,
so

so as to do themselves good and make themselves happy. Teach them to love their Bodies, and therefore to endeavour to preserve their Health and Strength, by Temperance, Chastity, and Industry; and to preserve their Lives and Limbs, by a kind affable, inoffensive behaviour towards all Men. Make them afraid to pull down Diseases upon themselves by Riot and Intemperance, by a disorderly way of living, by keeping ill Hours, and making that use of the Night which God has ordained the Day for, and Sleeping in the Day which is given us to work in; and make them afraid to provoke furious and bloody Men, to wound or to kill them, by offering them any Injury either in word or deed.

Teach them to love their Souls, and therefore to endeavour to please God, that so they may be for ever happy with Him in Heaven; to love the ease and peace of their Minds, and therefore to keep themselves innocent from Sin, the guilt of which is the most fretting and vexatious thing in the world; and to subdue those passions, which if they suffer to be headstrong and unruly, will give them abundance of trouble. Let them not give way to intemperate Wrath and Fury, to the desire of Revenge, to Malice and to Hatred; for these are so many Evil Spirits, which if entertained and countenanced, will not fail often to haunt their minds, and to disturb their rests, with ugly and frightful Apparitions.

And

And as one great instance of love to themselves, let them learn to improve themselves in Knowledge and Wisdom, and to encrease those natural perfections and faculties which make men truly valuable, and are the main reasons why they should love themselves. And you may withall make them consider the dignity of their Nature, and the excellency of their Reason.

Put them often in mind that they are the workmanship of God himself, and made by Him after His own Image; that He has given them Souls capable of seeing and discerning what is good and excellent, and of choosing what they see to be worthy of their choice, and what a pity it is that all this should be to no purpose.

And, tho' 'tis a poor, and weak, and foolish thing to be proud, and you must discourage all the beginnings of that Vice because 'tis one of the most successful Instruments that the Devil do's make use of to turn us away from God; yet you will find it needful to possess them with a due opinion and esteem of the excellency of their Souls, and to make them have a due regard and respect for themselves. For this will make them scorn to do any thing that is pitiful and unreasonable, any thing that will debase their Souls, and make them vile and contemptible; and it will help to set them above all those mean and dirty vices which argue men to be of a paultry, brutish

tish spirit. To which purpose, endeavour as early as you can to raise in them some sense of Honour, to have a value for their good name, and for the good opinion of wise and good men, and to scorn and abhor the doing of any thing which may destroy their reputation among sober and vertuous people.

These (my Brethren) are some of the things which I heartily wish you would take pains to instill into the minds of your Children, as soon as they are capable of them. You see they are no mysteries, 'Tis only to teach them to love God who made them, and their Saviour who died to redeem them; and this will easily bring them to pay due Honour, and Worship, and Obedience to so great benefactors; To love their Neighbours, and this will incline them to Justice, and Equity, and Charity; and to love themselves, and then they will neither hurt their bodies by intemperance, nor provoke others to hurt them; nor make their souls mean and vile, nor force God to make them miserable, by sin and wickedness.

And I am sure that these Parents who do set themselves heartily to infuse these Principles into their Children, and do beg of God that they may have good success in these endeavours of theirs which are so pleasing to him, cannot want any day an opportunity of doing something towards it: but will meet with some new argument, either in the goodness of God, or in the behaviour of other persons whom they see and converse

verse with, or in the Children themselves, to urge and press most of these things upon them.

And as one mighty help towards this good work, let me beseech you to have your Children taught to read the Bible, especially the Historical Books of it; and shew them as they go along the way, to take notice of the goodness and love of God towards those people who were good, and of his hatred and wrath against the wicked and disobedient.

The great reason why some Children do read the Bible, and are not much the better for it, is that their Parents do not put them into the way of making themselves the wiser by it. For they often think they have done enough, if they have taught them to repeat something concerning Wars and Fighting, the strength of *Sampson*, the bigness of *Goliath*, and the age of *Methuselah*, and such like things, which are extraordinary and wonderful; How much more wou'd it tend to their advantage, if you wou'd make them take notice, that *Sampson* was ruined by following an ill Woman; that God did assist *David* because he was good, and did please him, to kill that Giant who was a wicked Heathen, and an Enemy of God's people? That God did suffer men to live so long before the Flood, because of their great piety and goodness, and that, as all the world except eight persons were destroyed, so the age of men was shortned, for their sins? To recommend to them the Patience of *Job*, the Meekness of *Moses*, the Love
of

of *Joseph* to his Brethren, and the great Care that all good Men took to please God, and how God did condescend to own them as his Friends for it; and to make them observe how happy the People of *Israel* were when they served God, and what miseries he brought upon them as often as they rebelled against him. If you will use your Children to make such remarks as these upon the Stories they meet with in the Bible, you will find it turn to very good account.

And that they may have the substance of their duty constantly before their Eyes, and well imprinted in their Memories, I conceive it to be absolutely necessary that they be made to learn by heart some Catechism; and I cannot recommend any one so fit for the younger sort as the *Catechism* set forth by our Church in the Common-Prayer-Book, which was Composed by those Wise and Excellent Men who first Reformed our Church from the Corruptions of Popery, and who laid down their Lives in defence of the Reformation. And I conceive this *Catechism* has the advantages of most others in at least one of these three points.

1. It is Solid and Orthodox. The matters contained in it are for the most part consented to by all the Christian Churches in the World, and they are agreeable to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and of the ancient Church. The Apostles Creed is collected
out

out of the Bible, and as to the main has been just what it is, near these 1500 Years. The Commandments and the Lords Prayer are word for word taken out of the Bible, and the Duties towards God and their Neighbour are the substance of what is required in the Commandments. And the Doctrine of the Sacraments is the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, of St. Paul, and of the Primitive Fathers.

2dly. This Catechism is plain and easie to be understood by Children. The stile is not difficult, it has no hard words, nothing but the plain necessary Articles of Belief, and matters of common duty and practice, sum'd up after such a manner as may best suit with the capacities of those for whom it is designed. There is nothing in it but what may be apprehended by a very mean share of understanding; No disputable Points which are fit only for Scholars; No mysterious speculations which carry men out of sight into the Clouds; but all that it contains, are the *words of truth and soberness*. And

3dly. Tho this Catechism be so full and comprehensive as to contain the substance of all necessary things, yet 'tis so admirably well contrived as to be no great burthen to the memory of a Child. They have here all the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith, all the distinct parts of our Duties towards God, our Neighbours and our Selves; a full account of our Covenant with God thro Christ

in Baptism, and of the nature, and use, and benefits of both the Sacraments, all sum'd up in so few words that 'tis no hard matter for a Child to learn to repeat them all.

In a word, this Catechism is so skilfully and judiciously composed, that I fear it will one day rise up in judgment against a great many Parents who neglect to make their Children partakers of the benefits of it. And this is what I thought necessary to be spoken concerning the Instruction of your Children.

2. The second Duty I mentioned, is that you must endeavour that your Children may have good Examples in your Families, and as near as you can, abroad too. For without your care in this particular, your pains laid out in instructing them will be in danger of being lost upon them. For if they see you earnest in perswading them to serve God, and yet very negligent in that service your selves; for Example, If you tell them that they must honour the Scriptures, as the Word of God, and yet when Prophane, Atheistical People come to you, your Children hear you and them speak irreverently of those Holy Books, and of the things contained in them; if you send them to Church and stay at home your selves; if you teach them the Fourth Commandment, and yet in your own practice make no distinction between the *Lords Day* and the other days of the week,

week, unless it be that on that day you do quit the works of your Calling, and give your selves wholly to Idleness, or what *St. Paul* terms the *works of the flesh*; If you tell them that they must honour the Name of God, *and not take it in vain*, and yet Swear and Curse before them every day; Do not you think, do not too many of you find by sad-experience, that they will take more notice of what you do your selves, than of what you teach them to do, and that they will be much apter to follow your Examples than your Advice?

Nay, if you do not behave your selves thus wickedly before them, yet if you keep Servants in your Houses who are prophane and wicked; or if you suffer your Children to converse abroad with other Children, who have been neglected by their Parents, and (as it is now too common) left to themselves, and to what they can learn from wicked Servants, and from other wicked Children; what effect can you hope that your Instructions will have upon them?

All sorts of Examples, most of all wicked ones, do provoke imitation, and especially in those who are young; and therefore if you have a true and hearty concern for your Childrens being taught the *ways of God*, set them a good Example your selves, and let them discern and take notice of your Piety, your Charity, your Temperance and Sobri-

Sobriety. Do not think that you can perswade them to say their Prayers constantly while they never find that you say yours; and if they hear you speak evil of Gods Ministers, you may assure your selves they will pay little regard to their Sermons: Or if they hear you talk spightfully and maliciously of other Men, and vow to be revenged upon such as have disoblged you, and to do them all the mischief you can; how do you think you shall be able to perswade them to be meek, and loving, and peaceable, and to forgive their Enemies? And to name no more instances; if you let them see you often Drunk, and like Beasts, you cannot expect that your Instructions of Sobriety and Temperance (if you should be minded to give them such) can have any influence upon them.

Whereas on the other hand, if you do in your own persons practise before them all those Vertues and Graces which you recommend to them, if you make your Servants talk, and behave themselves, ver-
tuously before them; and if, as near as you can, you suffer them to converse with no other Children but those who are bred up in the fear of God; you may reasonably hope to see the fruits of your pains in instructing them, and to rejoyce in the good effects of them.

3dly. You must add to this, due and moderate Correction. For it is not to be expected that either
your

your good instructions or examples will be always able to prevail upon their Children tho they be ever so towardsly; but sometimes their own disorderly inclinations, sometimes the evil examples of Servants or of other Children will have greater influence over them. And therefore K. Solomon do's in many places of the Book of *Proverbs*, with a great deal of earnestness, press Parents to use the *Rod of Correction*, in order to reclaim them from evil courses. But then it must be used discreetly and after such a manner as may best answer the design of it, and bring them to diligence & obedience. For if you correct them in a fury they'l think you do it only to satisfy your passion, but if you do it with mildness and calmness, you may convince them that you do it out of love to them, and for their good.

And when you have by good Instruction, and good Examples, and prudent and seasonable correction, brought your Children to a good and vertuous temper and disposition of mind; you must not think that you have acquitted your selves of all that lay upon you to do for them.

4. But 4thly, you must bring them up to some honest Calling, or have them instructed in some Arts and Sciences, which may render them useful to themselves and to the publick. For God has put us all into the World with a design that every one of us shou'd do something towards promoting the publick good and happiness of it; and no man who has any thing of a

Soul in him above that of a Brute, can possibly think that his business here is only like that of a Beast, to eat, and drink, and sleep, and to be the cause that more Brutes come into the World, and afterwards to die. No, we have every one of us some part or other to Act, some part set us by our great Master; and you'll do well to consider, that if you do not bring up your Children to be fit to do their parts in the Service of God and of mankind, you will give the Devil a fair opportunity to employ them in his Service, and in doing of mischief to themselves or others. For there is nothing that do's expose a man to more Sins than Idleness, and having nothing to do; and if you look abroad you'll find that no men are generally more unhappy, or do fall into more extravagances and misfortunes, than those persons whose time do's lye heavy upon their hands, because that by the neglect of their Parents they grew to be men without being brought up to be fit for any thing. Enquire, who are the Libertines and Atheists, who are the Despisers of Religion and profest Enemies of Morality and Goodness, who are most profane and debauched, the greatest scandal to their Family, and shame and grief to their Friends; and examine how they came to be so, and you'll be satisfied, that Idleness, want of Employment, and that, occasioned by want of good Education, were mainly the causes of all this.

I do not mean, that every one when he is young, must be bound to learn some Manual Trade, and work with their hands; for there are Callings and Employments for all sorts and conditions of Men, and some of them do require only the labour of the Head and of the Mind; but this I may venture to say, That every Parent is bound to do their part towards qualifying their Children to serve the World, and to be useful to mankind after some sort or other. They who are not rich enough to breed up their Children to Learning, may breed them up to some honest Trade and Calling, or Employment; and even those who are so poor that they can scarce do that, may have them taught to Read; the neglect of which is the great cause of that fatal Ignorance which do's so lamentably reign among the meaner sort of People. And, which is very strange, tho you shall hear many Parents bemoan their misfortune that they were not taught to read themselves, and it may be with some reflections upon their Parents; yet when it comes to their turn, you'll see them act as if that neglect were hereditary to them, and suffer their young ones to spend their whole time, in meer Idleness, and in learning of Vice and Wickedness.

Nor must those whom God has blessed with Riches, think that they are therefore exempted from any obligation of this kind, but on the contrary they will

will find his rule to be, that to whom much is given, from them shall more be required; and it will be found at long run, if they fail to give their Children due Education, that the Fortunes they leave them will prove Curses instead of Blessings; and if it pleases God in his providence to deprive their Children of that Wealth, whom do you see in such circumstances more shiftless and miserable than the Sons of Gentlemen, whose Parents depended so much upon the Estates they were to leave them, that they bred them up fit for nothing.

The chief causes of which common fault I take to be a mistake that runs in too many peoples Heads, that all sorts of Learning and Professions are to be looked on only as so many Trades, and ways of getting ones maintenance, and that therefore those who are able to leave their Children a great deal of Wealth, as they scorn to put them to any inferiour Callings, so they need not breed them up Scholars. But then, this while they have no notion of the common Good, no concern for the service and benefit of the World, no regard to the particular advantages that their Children themselves might receive by the improvement of their faculties.

There are Professions and Employments fit for Gentlemen, and not below the pains of Persons of higher rank and quality. In antient times it was the great ambition of Men of Quality to breed up their
Sons

Sons to the study of Divinity, not barely to make them capable of Preferments, which they might by their Interest procure for them, however deserving or undeserving they were, which is often done in the Church of *Rome*, but out of true zeal for the Service of God and His Church. And it may be justly said for the honour of the Reformation, that seldom any of the Sons of Noblemen or Gentlemen were bred up to the Ministry but they became eminent both for their Learning and Piety. 'Twas the Service of Gods Church that those good Men of old did chiefly intend in making their Sons Clergymen; and there are many reasons why Men of good Birth or Honourable Descent may prove eminently serviceable in the Church, if they be equally humble, and industrious. Besides this, the study of the Laws of the Land, and that most useful and necessary study of Physick have in all Ages been accounted honourable, and no Person of Quality will be in danger of degrading himself by his application to these Studies, unless the Age do's become wholly barbarous: I shall not say how far Idleness, and being good for nothing do's degrade persons of Honourable Extraction in the Eyes of Wise Men; but this I may lay down as a certain Rule, that people of all conditions, who would have their Children brought up to be good Christians, must bring them up when they are young to something that

I

may

may employ them when they come to be Men; for, if something that may accomplish them, or make them useful to their Generation, do's not employ their time; You may assure your selves that Satan will find work for them.

C H A P. III.

Of Confirmation.

IN the *Introduction* to this Discourse I did intimate to you that *altho the Name and Form of Confirmation be peculiar to the Established Church*, yet in what I shall offer to you concerning it, you will find the substance of it agreed to by all Protestants who do allow of the Baptizing of Infants. For as far as I can learn, they do all hold it to be reasonable and fit that those who have been so Baptiz'd, should, when they come to Years of Discretion, take upon themselves the Vow which was made in their names by others; And that this should be done before they be admitted to the Holy Communion.

And this was also done constantly in the Primitive Church. When Children arrived to years of competent ripeness and maturity they were brought to the

the Bishop, and did publickly and solemnly in his presence ratifie that compact which they had made with God in Baptism, and declare their Resolution of continuing in the Faith of Christ, and in obedience to Gods Holy Commandments. Upon which the Bishop did lay his Hands upon them, and Bless them in the Name of God; imploring over them his Grace and Assistance *to confirm them in those good Resolutions, and to enable them to perform those Vows and Purposes, and that Profession of Faith which they had before embraced in Baptism, and then again owned before the whole Congregation; and till this was done they were not admitted to the Holy Communion.*

The reason why this was required to be done before the Bishop, and why the *laying on of Hands* was reserved solely to Him, was partly in respect of the Bishop, and partly of those who were so Confirmed. In respect of the Bishop it was considered, That the Care of all the Souls in his Diocess was committed to Him with the respective Ministers under his Conduct; and therefore seeing they had all of them power to Baptize and bring Persons into the Church without his knowledge, it was thought fit that the Persons so brought in should be presented to the Bishop and renew their Baptismal Vow in his presence, before they were admitted to the highest privilege in the Church, the partaking of the Lords Supper. And with respect to Persons to be Confirmed, it was

presumed that the Solemnity of the Bishops presence might make the greater impression upon them, and that the young persons might be the more wrought upon by his Fatherly Encouragement and Exhortation.

And why *the laying on of Hands* was used in this case I think I need not argue, my design being not to dispute with any one, but to exhort you to prepare your Children for the discharge of this Duty. But thus much I may say without going beyond my design, That our blessed Saviour gave an undoubted Precedent of the fitness of this Rite of *laying on Hands* in *Blessing*, by using it Himself to Children that were brought to Him. So that I think there can be no dispute but that it may now be fitly used by those who are appointed to *bless* in the name of God in general, and particularly on this occasion of young persons solemnly confirming the Vows that were made for them when they were baptised.

Laying aside therefore matter of Dispute, I will only shew you what opinion several Protestants of great Fame and Reputation have had of this Rite of *laying on of Hands* upon this occasion of *Confirmation*, in Churches where they have not had Bishops. And this I am willing to do in order to take off such prejudices as possibly some among you may have, out of mistake, entertained against it.

And

And the first shall be the Famous Mr Calvin, whose words in his Institutions are to this effect. *Inst. Lib. 4. C. 19. S. 4.* The custom in old time was, that the Children of Christians when they were grown up were brought before the Bishop, that they might fulfill that duty which was required from such persons as being of riper years did offer themselves to Baptism. For these persons (*that is those of riper years*) did sit among the Catechumens, (*that is persons that newly entered into the Christian Religion*) until such time as being duly instructed in the mysteries of Faith, they might make a Confession of their Faith before the Bishop and the People. But they who were Baptised in their Infancy, because they were not then capable of professing their Faith before the Church, at the end of their Childhood or beginning of their Youth, they were presented again by their Parents, and examined by the Bishop, according to a certain and common form of Catechism which they then had. And that this action, which otherwise deservedly ought to be grave and holy, might have the more of Reverence and Dignity, they also used the Ceremony of Imposition of Hands. So the Child, its Faith being approved of, was dismissed with a solemn Blessing. Of this Custom the Antients do often make mention. And after his Description and Confutation of the corrupt

Doctrine of the Church of Rome in this point; He adds, 'Such an Imposition of Hands, by way of Blessing, I do praise and wish it were at this day restored to its pure use. And afterwards, Sect. 14. 'I wish we did retain that Custom, which I told you was among the Antients.

The same learned Man in his Book *De Verâ Ecclesiæ Reformatione*, pag. 329. says, 'And we also (speaking of Confirmation) could with good reason wish that the Rite were every where restored, by which Children after having made confession of their Faith, may be offer'd to God.

Once more. The same Mr. Calvin, in his *Commentary* upon the Epistle to the Hebrews, Cap. 6. upon the 2d. Verse, where the Apostle mentions the laying on of Hands, has this remarkable passage. 'Here the laying on of Hands is joined with Baptism, because as there were two ranks of those who were newly instructed, so there was a double Ceremony. And then having given the substance of the account which I have before laid down out of his *Institutions*, He adds, 'This one place doth abundantly testify that the source of this Ceremony did flow from the Apostles. And having reflected upon the abuse of it in the Church of Rome, He concludes, *Wherefore at this day the pure Institution is to be retained, but the Superstition to be corrected.*

I may also put you in mind that the *Non-conforming Divines* in their *Reformation of the Liturgy*, which they presented to the Bishops, and published 1661, do offer it as a Rule, 'That none shall be admitted by the Minister to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, till they have at years of discretion understood the meaning of their Baptismal Covenant, and with their own Mouths, and their own Consent, openly before the Church ratified and confirmed it, and also promised that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe & keep such things as by their own Mouth and Confession they have assented to.

And in the *Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers in and about London, formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational*, published Anno 1691. The third Article of the first Head is, *That none shall be admitted as Members in order to Communion in all the special Ordinances of the Gospel, but such persons as are knowing and sound in the fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion, without scandal in their Lives, and to a judgment regulated by the Word of God, are persons of visible Godliness and Honesty; credibly professing cordial subjection to Jesus Christ.* This Rule I conceive cannot be put into practice without some such Examination, and open Profession of the Persons to be admitted as our Church do's require.

In short, Mr. Baxter did look upon Confirmation as so necessary, that he thought it worth his while to write a whole Book upon it, and with great earnestness to press and exhort all persons to promote the practice of it; and in the *Postscript*, after having answered a great many Objections, he makes the following Declaration, by which you will see that he pleaded for the same Confirmation which our Church do's appoint. His words are; *I will contend with no man whether the approved profession which I have pleaded for in this Book, be the very same thing with the Antients Confirmation. I have given you my thoughts of it, and I am sure the thing in question is our duty, and the name not unfit, and that its the same with the Confirmation owned by the Divines of the Reformed Churches, and particularly with that established and recommended in the Book of Common Prayer, here in England, for the substance.* And in the Book, Prop. 13. He proves at large that *Imposition of Hands in Confirmation is a lawful and convenient Ceremony, and ordinarily to be used, as it hath been of old by the universal Church.*

Having said thus much concerning this Duty in general, and with relation to all Parties in the Christian Church that own Infant Baptism, I shall now give you a brief account of the meaning and design of our Church in having Children brought to be *Confirmed by the Bishop*, and then lay down a few directions

Directions after what manner you may prepare your Children in order to be *Confirmed*.

1st. The meaning and design of *our Church*, in having Children brought to be *Confirmed by the Bishop*, may be learned from the Preface to the Office of *Confirmation*; which declares the end of it to be, *that Children being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism; they may themselves with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the Grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they by their own confession have assented to.* And the same may further appear by the Question that the *Bishop* is to put to the persons who are brought to be *Confirmed*, in these words. *Do ye here in the presence of God, and of this Congregation, renew the solemn Promise and Vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging your selves bound to believe and to do all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you? To which Question, every one that is to be Confirmed, must audibly answer, I do.*

For the understanding of which, you may please to remember, that according to the tenor of the *New Testament*, we have no way of being capable of the great Blessings which *Christ* hath purchased by his

Death, but by being in Covenant with him. All the promises of pardon of Sin, and of the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, of the acceptance of our honest performances, and of everlasting Happiness in Heaven, are made and belong only to those who are in Covenant with God, upon the terms of that New Covenant into which He is pleased to suffer Us to enter for the sake of the meritorious Atonement and satisfaction made by our Saviour's Death.

Now we are taught no way of being admitted into this Covenant but by *Baptism*. 'Tis this which puts us into actual possession of several of the benefits of it, provided that we faithfully discharge what is engaged on our part. For by *Baptism* we are taken into the number of those whom *Christ* is pleased to account his own *Body*, and to whom He has done the honour of making himself the *Head*; We are adopted into the Family of God, and made his Children, and delivered from that state of wrath and sin, and misery into which sin hath brought us; and we are admitted again into God's Favour so far as to have a right to the assistance of his Holy Spirit here, and a glorious Immortality in the Life to come. These are the things for which God is pleased to covenant on his part.

On the other hand, We do then covenant with God, that we will *renounce the Devil and all his works*, and that we will not be governed by sinful Men, or
sinful

sinful Customs, or by our own wicked natural Inclinations; but that the Commandments of God shall be the rule of our Actions; and that in order to obey them upon a good foundation, we will hold fast that form of sound words, that Doctrine which is according to Godliness, that has been delivered to Us by Christ and his Apostles. This is the sum of what is done, when we are Baptized.

And seeing that St. Paul has declared that the Children of Believing Parents are in their Infancy Holy, that is, capable of being dedicated to God, and received into his Church; it has been the practice of all Ages, as it is now of our Church, to admit to the Sacrament of Baptism the Children of Believing Parents. And because the Infants to be Baptized are not able to declare their Consent to the Conditions of this Covenant with God, it has been always the practice of the Church to allow sober and discreet persons to appear for them, and to undertake that when they come to be capable of it, they shall be instructed in the nature of that solemn Engagement that was made for them, and so be made fit to take it upon themselves, and discharge their Sureties from their Engagements. This has been hitherto the way of admitting Children into the Church of Christ.

But our Church has thought something more than this needful to qualify persons who have been Baptized

tized, for the receiving the Blessed Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which is the highest priviledge to be enjoyed in the Christian Church. And therefore the Rule is, *That none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be Confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be Confirmed.* That is, before they be admitted to the Holy Communion they must solemnly own and profess, in the presence of the Bishop and of their fellow Christians, That they do ratifie and approve of what was done by their Sureties on their behalf. And therefore the Bishop puts the Question to them, Whether they do freely take upon themselves, and renew, the Vows that were made for them? that is, in other words, Whether they be willing to trust God and their Saviour Christ with their Salvation and everlasting Happines, upon those terms and conditions which in the Covenant made with God in Baptism are required on our part. So that we may take the Bishop's Blessing them, as a publick and solemn attestation that they have taken the Vow of Baptism upon themselves, and by their own voluntary act have solemnly obliged themselves to obey God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their lives. For his own assurance of the truth of which, the Bishop has something more than the publick Declaration of the Parties themselves in his presence; for the Rubrick requires that the Curate of every Parish shall either bring or
send

send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the Names of all such Persons within his Parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be Confirmed.

Thus I have laid before you plainly the substance of what is intended by *Confirmation*, as it is now publicly ministred in *the Church of England*, from the Constitution of the Church it self.

adly. I come now to offer you a few Directions, after what manner you may prepare your Children in order to be *Confirmed*.

For tho it be the Ministers duty to Catechize them publicly, and to examine and approve of them before they be brought to the Bishop; yet let me put you in mind, that this do's not discharge you from the obligations that God has laid upon you *to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6. 4.* and you may assure your selves that God will call you to account, if you neglect the using the advantages you have of authority, affection, continual converse, and many fair opportunities, which Ministers cannot have, of *making known Gods truths to your Children.*

And the first thing that I shall offer to you is, that you must not think very young Children, or such as are of riper years, but very ignorant or vitious, fit to be *Confirmed*. I have already observed to you that the Preface to the *Office of Confirmation* requires, that the Children to be *Confirmed* shall first have ar-

rived at the years of discretion, and have learnt well what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in their Baptism, that they may with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church ratifie and confirm the same.

I must confess, if the Bishop's Blessing were all that is aimed at in Confirmation there would be no absurdity in bringing any young Children to the Governours of the Church, as the Jews did to our Blessed Saviour, *that they may lay their Hands upon them and Bless them.* But the Blessing given by our Bishops, you see, is given upon a supposition that the persons so blest have ratified and confirmed the Covenant which was made with God for them when they were Baptized, and that they have taken it upon themselves, and that they did understand what they were doing, otherwise it could not properly be said to be their Act. When therefore you are considering with your selves, whether your Child should be confirm'd or no, put this Question to your own Hearts; Have I reason to think that my Child is so well instructed in the Principles of Religion; that He is qualified to make a Covenant with God for Himself, and in his own name? And is he sufficiently discreet and serious to undertake so solemn a work? If he be not thus knowing and well disposed why should I have him publickly and solemnly profess to do these things for which I know him to be unfit.

The Variety & Differences between Children in respect of their Parts and Capacities, and the opportunities they have of being instructed, are so considerable, that it is not reasonable to assign the exact year of their age, at which they shou'd be confirm'd; but the way for every one to determine that Point for himself, will be, to have due regard to the seriousness and understanding of the Child, and to the progress he has made in matters of Piety and Religion; and you may take this as a certain Rule, that Children who can only say their *Catechism* by rote, without understanding the sense and meaning of it, cannot be said to have *learnt* it well, and to be of such *Discretion* as our Church requires; and therefore such are too young; and that, let the Age and Parts of young persons be what they will, if they be wild and giddy, or vitious, they are not fit to be Confirm'd; for if they be not serious, they are not fit to make a Covenant with God; and if they do follow wicked Courses, they cannot profess in truth that *they have renounced the Devil and all his works.*

And that you may not be under any temptation to offer your Children to be Confirm'd, before they be sufficiently prepared and fit for it, out of an opinion that perhaps you may not frequently have such opportunities, I do propose, while God is pleased to continue me among you, by his assistance, often to dispense this Ordinance of our Church, in the most convenient places of each Diocess; so that you may take your own
time

time with your Children, to do that which shall seem fittest to you.

However, tho I wou'd not have you bring Children that are either too young, or ignorant, to be *Confirmed*; yet I must tell you, that you are to begin very early to lay the foundation of preparing them for it. And the Advices I gave you in the former Chapter, are chiefly design'd to put you in the way of dealing with very young Children. And for such, I must now further exhort you, not only to cause them to be present at the service of God in your Families, but as soon as they can be kept from giving disturbance to others, that you will bring them to the places of God's publick Worship; and teach them to behave themselves decently and reverently in *God's House, the House of Prayer*; and afterwards by degrees, that you will question what they remember of Sermons, and teach them to hear, so that they may profit by them.

And I must note to you, that by recommending to you the *Church Catechism*, I did not intend to exclude your making your Children read any other good *Catechisms* or Books, which may more fully instruct them in the matters contained in it, when they come to be capable of such Instructions; but on the contrary, do encourage and exhort you to it.

And when by these and other fit means, and by your constant and earnest Prayers to God for them, you see them at last arrive to such a measure of Discretion,

Discretion, and Seriousness, and Goodness, that they are fit to take their Baptismal Vows upon themselves, I shall recommend the following Directions to you in order to the immediate preparing them for Confirmation.

Tell them then in the first place, That this administration is not only a bare Ceremony; that the work before them is not only to kneel and to receive the Bishop's Blessing, but that 'tis one of the most serious and solemn action of their whole lives.

Tell them, that 'tis no less than the entering into a solemn Covenant with the great God of Heaven and Earth, upon the observance or breach of which their everlasting Happiness or everlasting Misery will depend. That, 'tis the taking upon them the profession of an holy and vertuous life; 'tis the proclaiming perpetual War against Satan and their own Lusts. 'Tis renouncing all the Vanities of Youth, all the Honours, and Pleasures, and Riches of this World, when they cannot be obtained, or enjoyed, without displeasing God. 'Tis an engagement to *take up the Cross* and to follow the Example of their Saviour Jesus Christ, in suffering meekly and patiently *for Righteousness sake*, if it shall please God to call them to it.

These are great and serious things, and not to be undertaken carelessly and hastily. And therefore you must often put them in mind to weigh these things beforehand, and to consider withall their own frail-

ty, and the temptations and snares wherewith they are surrounded, and also that constant care and watchfulness over their Souls, and resisting their most violent inclinations to Evil, that they must there promise, and will be expected from them. And if they seem to be frightened or discouraged when you represent these things to them; you may comfort them with telling them, that altho *with Man this is impossible, with God all things are possible*, and therefore that they must not undertake these things upon their own strength, but they must go out against these Enemies of their Souls, as *David* did against his, *in the name and the strength of the Lord God*, and from him alone they must expect Victory and Salvation; *his Grace will be sufficient for them*, and thro him *they will be able to do all these things*.

Upon which account you must instruct them that not only at that time, but through the whole course of their lives they must make it their constant practice every day with fervent and hearty Prayers to implore the Grace of God's Holy Spirit; that He will please to shed it abroad in their Hearts, and thereby create Holy Thoughts and Resolutions in their Minds, that notwithstanding all the oppositions they must meet with, they may be able to persevere in a holy and vertuous life, and continue in his favour to the end of their days.

Tell them then, that they are to renew a Covenant with God which was made for them when they were so young as not to know what was done for them. That they are now to make it in their own Names; and that if they will sincerely endeavour to perform their part of it, they shall be for ever happy with God in Heaven; but if they will not take it upon their Souls with Truth and a good Conscience, they do renounce all the glorious things that Christ hath purchased for them; they renounce all the Benefits of his Passion, they disclaim all interest in the Atonement which He made for sin; they are still in *their sins*, in *the gall of bitterness*, and in *the bonds of iniquity*, they are *Children of wrath*, and must be sentenced to live for ever in darkness, and flames, *with the Devil and his Angels*.

These are indeed grievous and sad things, but you must let them know that it is now by the favour and grace of God in their power to prevent them. For if they do repent of their evil deeds, that is, are truly sorry for their sins, and resolve to forsake them and to turn to the Lord their God with all their Hearts; We know that God has promised not only that He will forgive their Iniquities, but He will also receive them into favour, and bestow upon them such a measure of His Grace as may enable them to conquer all difficulties that they shall meet with in their way to Heaven; and they may assure themselves,

selves, if they come thus prepared to enter into Covenant with God; that as certainly as the Bishop do's lay his Hand upon their Heads, so surely God will pardon all their past transgressions, and cause his Holy Spirit to descend into their Hearts, and renew their Souls unto Righteousness and true Holiness.

And now, I hope, this view which I have given you of the design and benefit of *Confirmation*, will put you upon serious endeavours to discharge those Duties of yours to your Children relating to it, which I have now laid before you. For what greater comfort can you have, than to see them by their own act so early engaging themselves to God, and taking this happy course to confirm themselves in his ways, before that Vice has corrupted their Minds; or if unhappily it has already done so, to see them make use of these fit means to expell it timely, before it can take deeper root.

To those of you who do love God, your Children, and your own true peace and comfort, I know, I need not use more words to perswade you to a diligent and hearty discharge of this Duty of preparing your Children for Confirmation. And for those among you (if such there be) who are so very unhappy as to have little or no regard to the welfare either of their own or their Childrens Souls, I must mourn and lament; and do more earnestly beseech the God and Father of Spirits, to give such Success and Blessing

Blessing to my Ministration among you, and to the labours of those whom his Providence has joined with Me in the care of your Souls; that his Grace may, by our publick dispensation of his Word and Ordinances, reach even those little neglected Creatures, of whom our Blessed Lord is so tender; and who, as He has taught Us, are fittest to *receive the Kingdom of God*; and that they may be thereby engaged to God's Service, before that the Enemy of Souls has brought them under his Dominion. Which God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of our Blessed Redeemer, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory, now, and for ever. *Amen.*

O

Prayers

Prayers to be said, Before, At, and After Confirmation.

BEfore Confirmation, let some time be set apart for the immediate Preparation of your Children for it; part of which must be spent in Reading of good Books, especially such as may instruct them in the nature of their Vow in Baptism, and may set their Duties before them; and assist them in Examining their Consciences concerning the former neglects of their Duties, in order to give them a sense of their Sins, and to engage them to a firm Resolution of Obedience to every part of God's Law for the time to come. The *Whole Duty of Man* has at the End of it such Heads of Examination; and I do recommend the following Prayers to be used by them.

A Prayer to be said by a Child that is to be
Confirmed.

O God my Heavenly Father, who hast made me and all mankind, I acknowledge that I was born in Sin, and that I am by nature a Child of Wrath; and I do Bless thy Holy Name, that of thy abundant goodness thou hast given thy dear Son to Redeem me and all mankind, and thy Holy Spirit to Sanctify me and all thy Elect People.

And I bless thee O my God, and I will for ever praise thee, that thou hast granted me so early to be Baptized into thy dear Son, to be born again of thy Holy Spirit, and to be made thy own Child by Adoption and Grace,

I Bless and Magnifie thy infinite Mercy O Lord, that thou didst please to enter into Covenant with me thy unworthy Servant, and to promise me thy Pardon and thy Grace here, and Glory hereafter; and withall, to accept of the Vow that was made by Others in my Name, of faithfully serving thee all the days of my Life. O my God, by the help of thy Grace, I will never disown, nor depart from that Vow.

My

My Soul does rejoyce in being bound by it to thee the God of my Life, whose service is perfect Freedom, and whose Token is an easie and gracious Token

I have Vowed, and I will perform it by the help of thy Grace, that I will Renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms & Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; that I will believe all that thou hast revealed to us, and that I will Love and Obey all that thou hast commanded, and continue in Obedience to thy holy Laws, by thy gracious help, to my lives end.

And now O my God I praise thee, that thou hast called me to the knowledg of thy Grace and Faith in Thee, Increase this Knowledg, and confirm this Faith in Me evermore. And since of my self I can do nothing that is good; O strengthen me by thy Grace, that I may be thereby able to do all things that thou requirest from me, and to resist all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and to continue thy faithful Servant all the days of my Life.

And my Soul does Magnifie Thee O Heavenly Father, for all the means of Grace which thou hast hitherto afforded Me, for all the good Instructions and Examples, and all the opportunities which thou hast granted Me of growing in Grace, and in the Knowledg of thee my God. Particularly for the present opportunity of Repeating my Vows to thee, and of Dedicating my self to thy Service before many Witnesses, and of Receiving a Testimony of thy Grace and Favour by the hand of thy servant, whom thou hast commanded to Bless in thy Name. O fit and prepare Me for this Holy Duty, that I may with Reverence and godly Fear draw nigh unto thee in it; and with all the Powers of my Soul may consent unto, and chearfully renew the Promise that was made in my Name. And O that I may Receive thy Grace, and be filled with thy Love, and be fruitful in all good Works, and that my Heart may be Established in Holiness before thee, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

To be said by the Child while He is waiting to be presented to the Bishop.

Lord, I am not worthy to be admitted into a Covenant with Thee the great God of Heaven and Earth; but thou callest Me, and behold here I am, ready to bind my Soul to Thee, and do beg that I may be thine for ever. I am weak and insufficient of my self; but speak Thou the word, and my Soul shall receive strength to fulfill all that I am now to promise unto Thee. I desire humbly to offer up my self to Thee, and the First Fruits of my Life, and of my Strength. O accept of this Offering in thy dear Son, and save me for Thy Mercies sake. Amen.

To be said by the Child after Confirmation.

O Merciful Father who hast thus graciously accepted Me to be Thine, I praise and adore Thee for this thy great goodness. Be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word Give Me power against all the Enemies of my Soul, and bring Me up in thy stedfast Fear and Love. Keep Me in all holy and humble walking with Thee, and watchfulness over my Heart and Ways; that this present Mercy may be an earnest of greater, and a step to lead Me to the Table of my Lord, and the partaking of all the Benefits of his Death and Passion; that so I may go happily on from Grace to Grace, and from strength to strength, and from one degree of thy Love unto another, until Thou shalt make Me in the end, perfect in it in Thy Heavenly Kingdom. All which I most humbly beg in the Name and for the sake of Thy dear Son my Lord and Saviour, who has taught Me to say, Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with Me now and for evermore. Amen.

The End.